

Appl. No. 09/980,327
Atty. Docket No. 7627
Amdt. dated December 8, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 09/30/2003
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS

Claims 19, 20, 22-24, 26 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

Claims 13-18, 21, 25 and 27-31 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 19, 22, and 23 have been amended to be rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of their respective previous base claims and any respective previous intervening claims.

Claim 26 has been amended to change its dependency, in response to the above-noted cancellation of Claim 13.

It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action states "Claims 19, 20, and 22-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Claims 19, 22, and 23 have been amended as suggested by the Office Action. Due to their original dependency, Claim 20 now incorporates all the limitations of amended Claim 19, and Claim 24 now incorporates all the limitations of amended Claim 23; and therefore are believed to be allowable without amendment. Claim 26 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 19, thereby incorporating all of the limitations of amended Claim 19; and therefore believed to be allowable without further amendment.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a) Over US 6,056,905

Claims 13-15, 17, 18, 21, 25, 26, 27, and 29-31 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US patent 6,056,905.

Claims 13-15, 17, 18, 21, 25, 27, and 29-31 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 26 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 19, thereby incorporating all the limitations of amended Claim 19, and is therefore believed to be non-obvious over US 6,056,905.

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Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a) Over US 6,056,905 in view of WO 99/03964

Claims 16 and 28 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,056,905 in view of WO 99/03964. Claims 16 and 28 have been canceled without prejudice.

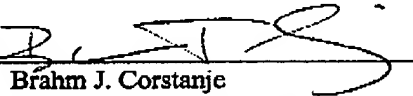
Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place their application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of Claims 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 26.

Respectfully submitted,

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